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ABSTRACT

A study compared the rhetoric of letter-writing in English and Japanese, focusing on: (1) relationship between degree of cultural awareness and writing behavior of Japanese students of English as a Second Language (ESL); and (2) relationship of cultural awareness and English proficiency in ESL student writing. Subjects were 120 Japanese college students majoring in English who wrote a college and scholarship application letter to an institution in the United States. English language proficiency was measured by a standardized test and cultural awareness by a test developed for this study. Subjects were grouped into four categories according to high and low language proficiency and high and low cultural awareness. Letters were analyzed for frequency and content of 16 distinct semantic formulas: self-identification; social talk; reference to the advertisement; reference to letter-writing; application message; reason; qualification; disqualification; petition; personal appeal; personal reference; promise; apology; request; closing remark; expectation of reply. Results indicate that students with high English proficiency and high cultural awareness showed letter-writing behavior closest to that of native English-speakers; those with low English proficiency and low cultural awareness showed patterns closest to Japanese letter-writing patterns. It is recommended that language teaching methods and materials integrate cultural and linguistic content. Contains 14 references. (MSE)

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ED 377 684

The Role of Cultural Awareness in Contrastive Rhetoric

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1. Introduction

Robert Kaplan first proposed a notion of contrastive rhetoric in 1966. Since then many writing researchers across the world have been engaged in active research in this new field. Enough evidence has been reported to support Kaplan's claim that each language has a culturally-preferred way of organizing ideas in discourse and that writers from different linguistic-cultural backgrounds transfer their preferred discourse patterns when they write in English. Among them, those dealing with the differences of Japanese and English are: Hinds (1979, 1980, 1981(a), (b)), Connor and McCagg (1983), Kobayshi (1984) and Oi (1986). All these are research dealing with expository writings. Research oriented toward more pragmatic perspectives has been scarce.

The present study involves the comparison of rhetorics in letter-writing in English and Japanese. The significance of this study is the following: (1) letter-writing is a type of English writing students will face most frequently in their life, and (2) letter-writing carries a pragmatic need in which they have to get their messages across by one way or another.

The scheme of the present study rests on the findings from our past two studies. The first study (Oi and Sato, 1990) concerns the nature and the degree of transfer of rhetoric of Japanese EFL students in letter-writing. We compared Japanese EFL students' writing with that of native-speakers of English. The comparison was three-fold. The first group was composed of Japanese students writing in Japanese (this is to see the nature of Japanese

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rhetoric); the second group was composed of Japanese students who wrote in English; and the third group was native-speakers of English writing in English. They all wrote under similar directions on the same task. In this research, not only did we find rhetorical differences in letter-writing between Japanese and American writers, we also found noticeable evidence of rhetorical transfer of Japanese students. However,in this research we did not take into consideration the proficiency levels of Japanese students. So it was unknown whether the difference was merely due to developmental factors or not.

The second study to review is Sato and Oi (1990). This study was conducted under a similar scheme. However, this time we divided the Japanese subjects into two groups according to the levels of English proficiency, "high" and "low". The result was that rhetorical transfer was observed across the proficiency levels. This means that the degree and nature of transfer is not determined by the English proficiency level alone. There must be another factor.

2. Present Study

2.1 Research Questions

From our previous two studies we found that English proficiency alone is not a decisive factor in determining the degree and nature of transfer of rhetoric. Therefore, in the present research, we set up a new factor, cultural awareness, which is in the domain pragmatic competence. Combining these two factors, we propose the following research questions:

(1) Does the degree of cultural awareness affect the writing behavior of the Japanese EFL students?

(2) If the degree of CA is related to the writing behavior of the students, what are the roles of cultural awareness and English proficiency respectively in the products of the students' writing?

2.2 Design of the Experiment

The research design of the present study is as follows:

· Subjects: 120 Japanese college students majoring in English.

· Task: Students were asked to write an application letter for college. They were to read a notice which announced the offer of a scholarship at a college in America and to write a letter applying for this college and the scholarship.

· Research method:

Based upon the results of the former two studies, we set up two factors to consider. One is the English proficiency levels of Japanese EFL students, and the other is the degree of cultural awareness of the students.

In order to measure the English proficiency levels, we administered CELT (Comprehensive English Language Test) which is commercially available and, to test cultural awareness, we made our original cultural awareness (CA) test. For the cultural awareness test, we have selected 20 questions of critical situations that reflect crucial differences between Japanese culture and American culture (See Appendix 1). These questions covered social life, school life and workplace life; all these could take place in American life. The questions were original, but the ideas were extracted from various books of cross-cultural communication that mainly emphasize the differences of the Japanese culture versus the American culture (Sakamoto & Naotsuka, 1982; Nishida, 1989, and Sherard, 1989).

We administered both the CELT and the CA test to all the subjects. Based upon the scores of these two tests, we divided the students into the following four groups (W, X, Y and Z), as is shown in Table 1.

The W group includes those students who scored high in both the CELT and the CA test. The students in the X group scored high in the CELT, but low in the CA test. The students in the Y group scored low in the CELT but high in the CA test. The Z group includes those students who scored low in

the both tests.

Table 1 Classification of Subjects

CELT \ CA	High ≧ 15	Low < 11
High ≧ 165	W (n = 9)	X (n = 9)
Low < 140	Y (n = 8)	Z (n = 16)

W: CELT-High, CA-High
X: CELT-High, CA-Low
Y: CELT-Low, CA-High
Z: CELT-Low, CA-Low

The demarcation line for the "high" is placed at the upper 30 percent line and the "low" at the lower 30 percent line in the both tests. That happened to be 165 points for the high and 140 points for the low for the CELT and 15 points for the high and 11 points for the low in the Cultural Awareness test, with the full point being 20. And we picked out the students who fell into these categories.

· Data analysis:

Each one of the letters written by the students were segmented according to different idea units which Beebe et al (1990) define as semantic formulas (SFs).

Thus, each letter was analyzed into a sequence of different SFs.

The SFs employed in the present study and the sample of each SF are as follows:

(1) Identification (ID): I am a student at --- college.

(2) Social Talk (ST): How are you?

(3) Referring to Ad (RE): I saw your ad about the scholarship.

(4) Writing a letter (WR): So I am writing an application letter.

(5) Application message (AP): I decided to apply.

(6) **Reason (REA)**: I'm interested in American culture and to study in America.

(7) **Qualification (QUA)**: I have a 3.8 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) at Menno, and a score in the upper 20% bracket on the SAT Test.

(8) **Disqualification (DIS)**: I'm afraid of going to the U.S. by myself.

(9) **Petition (PE)**: Could you please help me?

(10) **Personal appeal(PA)**: With these experiences, I feel I could make a positive contribution to ABC College and hope you will consider my application.

(11) **Reference (REF)**: I am enclosing a reference from Mr. Kempski, Head of the History Department.

(12) **Promise (PR)**: I'll study hard.

(13) **Apology (AP)**: I'm sorry I have a favor.

(14) **Request (REQ)** for information: Please send me any forms that need completing.

(15) **Closing remark(CR)**: I would appreciate for your kindness.

(16) **Expecting a reply(EX)**: I'm looking forward to your letter.

Those SFs were further analysed in two aspects: (1) frequency (which means how often they appear in their writing) and (2) content (which is the breakdown of each actual semantic formulas, in other words, concrete examples of semantic formulas). And the results were compared with those obtained in the former two studies in respect to the nature of mother-tongue writing (in the case of Japanese college students writing in Japanese) and the target language writing (in the case of native-speakers writing in English).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Frequency

Each application letter was segmented according to the 16 different SFs, and how often each SF appeared was examined across the four different groups.

Table 2 shows the frequencies of the sixteen SFs identified in the four groups as well as those identified in the American and Japanese subjects in the Oi and Sato study (1990).

Table 2 Frequency of the Semantic Formulas Used by Different Groups

SF	Group					
	American (n = 13)	W (n = 9)	X (n = 9)	Y (n = 8)	Z (n = 16)	Japanese (n = 30)
ID	11 (84.6%)	8 (88.9%)	6 (66.7%)	5 (62.5%)	10 (62.5%)	16 (53.3%)
ST	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	2 (22.2%)	2 (25.0%)	8 (50 %)	8 (26.7%)
AD	6 (46.2%)	5 (55.6%)	4 (44.4%)	4 (50 %)	8 (50 %)	25 (83.3%)
WR	6 (46.2%)	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	6 (20 %)
AM	10 (76.9%)	9 (100 %)	6 (66.7%)	6 (75 %)	11 (68.8%)	18 (60 %)
REA	6 (46.2%)	9 (100 %)	7 (77.8%)	7 (87.5%)	13 (81.3%)	30 (100 %)
QUA	8 (61.5%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (3.3%)
DIS	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	5 (16.7%)
PE	1 (7.7%)	0 (0 %)	2 (22.2%)	2 (25 %)	6 (37.5%)	11 (36.7%)
PA	5 (38.5%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
REF	3 (23.1%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
PR	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	4 (44.4%)	2 (25 %)	6 (37.5%)	11 (36.7%)
AP	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
IM	7 (53.8%)	5 (55.6%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (25 %)	5 (31.3%)	7 (23.3%)
CR	7 (53.8%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0 %)	2 (12.5%)	14 (46.7%)
EX	2 (15.4%)	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (25 %)	3 (18.8%)	2 (6.7%)

In our previous study (Oi & Sato, 1990; Sato and Oi, 1990), the following noticeable differences were found between the Japanese and American subjects' application letters:

(1) Many American subjects used 'persuasive' strategies by showing their abilities and previous experiences with concrete data. They often referred to their academic records and underscored their qualifications.

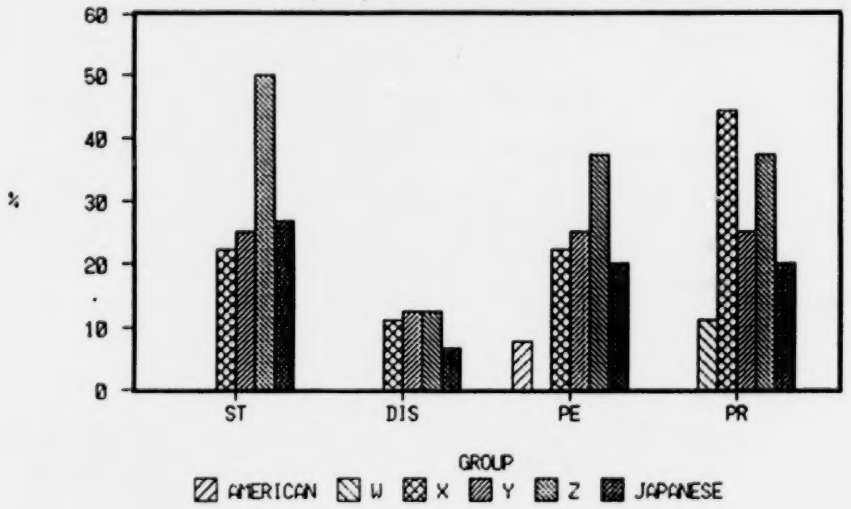
(2) On the other hand, the Japanese subjects, regarless of their English proficiency levels, tended to use 'emotional' strategies, which were meant to attract the reader's sympathy.

The Japanese subjects realized these 'emotional' strategies by using such SFs as "social talk," "disqualification," "petition," and "promise." Those four SFs were unique to the letters written by the Japanese subjects and never or scarcely found in the letters by the American subjects. Our previous studies suggested that these four formulas were evidence of the Japanese subjects' negative transfer from Japanese writing and that these formulas are culturally unacceptable in English letter writing when addressed to American readers.

The present study, therefore, places a special focus on the four SFs particularly identified as the earmarks in the Japanese subjects' application letters in the previous studies: i.e., social talk, disqualification, petition, and promise.

Figure 1 shows the frequencies (in percentage) of the four SFs used by different groups of subjects. The figure also shows the frequencies of those SFs used by the American and Japanese subjects in the Oi and Sato study (1990).

Figure 1
Frequency of the Four Semantic Formulas



Each of the four groups demonstrated unique writing behaviors. The writing behaviors of the W Group with high English proficiency and high cultural awareness were most similar to the American subjects' behaviors in the previous studies. No subjects in the W Group included "social talk," "disqualification," nor "petition," and only one subject included a "promise" (11.1%).

In contrast, the Z Group with low English and low cultural awareness deviated most from the native speakers' norm and showed the clearest transfer from Japanese. The Z Group ranked highest in the frequencies of the three SFs: "social talk" (50.0%), "disqualification" (12.5%), and "petition" (37.5%). They ranked second highest in the frequency of "promise" (37.5%) as well.

The X Group with high English proficiency and low cultural awareness and the Y Group with low English proficiency and high cultural awareness behaved almost the same. They stood in between the W and Z Groups. The frequencies of the four SFs used by the two groups were not as low as those of the X group, nor as high as those of the Z Group, except for the frequency of "promise" used by the X Group (44.4%). This suggests that both the X and Y Groups deviated less from the target group of native speakers than the Z Group, but still, they were not as successful as the W Group in English letter writing.

3.2 Content

The next step of analysis was to examine what the subjects actually wrote for each of the four SFs in the application letters. For each of the four SFs, several subcategories were set up to examine the content of the four SFs in detail. For example, according to the content, the SF "social talk" was further classified into such subcategories as "Hello," "How do you?" and "How are you?" Table 3 illustrates the results of the content analysis.

Table 3 Content of the Four Semantic Formulas

SF Subcategory	Group					
	American (n = 13)	W (n = 9)	X (n = 9)	Y (n = 8)	Z (n = 16)	Japanese (n = 30)
Social Talk						
*Hello	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0 %)	5 (31.3%)	2 (6.7%)
*How do you do?	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	6 (20 %)
*How are you?	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	2 (12.5%)	0 (0 %)
Disqualification						
*Don't know reality	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (3.3%)
*Don't have enough English ability	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	4 (13.3%)
*Afraid of going to America	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (3.3%)
*Cannot express opinions	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (6.3%)	0 (0 %)
Petition						
*Help me	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	2 (6.7%)
*Admit me	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	3 (18.8%)	2 (6.7%)
*Understand me	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	7 (23.3%)
*Give me the scholarship	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	1 (12.5%)	4 (25 %)	1 (3.3%)
*Give me a good answer	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (3.3%)
*Give me a chance	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (6.3%)	0 (0 %)
Promise						
*Study hard	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	2 (25 %)	5 (31.3%)	5 (16.7%)
*Make efforts	0 (0%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	3 (10 %)
*Lead a full life	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	2 (6.7%)
*Make good use of the scholarship	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	3 (10 %)
*Never give up	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
*Get something in America	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
*Do my best	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

As Table 3 shows, the content written by the Z Group deviated most markedly from the norm for the English application letter and reflected most clearly the practice of the Japanese application letter. The typical pattern of application letter by the Z Group started with a colloquial social talk "Hello" (31.3%), said, "I don't have enough English ability" (12.5%), yet pleaded for the scholarship by saying, "Please give the scholarship" (25.0%), and ended with a promise, saying, "I will study hard"

(31.3%). Thus, the letters by the Z Group had emotional and pathetic tones.

In contrast, there is only one example of "promise" for the W Group: "I will make efforts" (11.1%). Emotional and pathetic tones are not perceived in the letters by the W Group.

The X and Y Groups manifested only one or two examples of some subcategories of the four SFs; therefore, no definite pattern was observed which clearly characterizes these two groups. It can only be said that as was found in the results in the frequency count of the SFs, both the X and Y Groups were between the X and Z Groups: their letters did not sound so pathetic and emotional as those by the Z Group, but they were not so completely free from these tones as the X Group.

4. Analysis of Sample Writing

Numbers alone cannot illustrate clearly characteristic writing behaviors of each of the four groups. To clarify these behaviors, close examinations of the application letters written by the four groups were attempted. In the following section, sample letters which respectively represent the four different groups will be shown, and some characteristic writing behaviors will be explained for each group. Each sample letter is analyzed by SFs. All the errors are kept as they were, and for the sake of privacy, all the personal information, such as names, is deleted.

4.1 Sample 1: W Group with High English Proficiency and High Cultural Awareness

Sample 1 was written by Student 1 in the W Group with high English proficiency and high cultural awareness.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

*IDENTIFICATION
[I am a student in _____ University in Japan and I'm very interested in your exchange program between ABC College and our

*REASON
university. [I'm studying English and American Literature here and I believe studying in your college will much help my research in *APPLICATION MESSAGE
it as well as improving my English skills.] [Therefore I do want to apply for this program. And I would like to apply for the scholarship *REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
you offer simultaneously.] [Please send me a brochure and/or more details about them.]

*CLOSING REMARK
[Your most up-to-date information will be tremendously appreciated.]

Sincerely yours,

_____

Student 1's letter is quite close to the target application letters by the native speakers of English. He includes some of the major SFs required for English application letters, such as "identification," "reason," "application message," "request for information," and "closing remark." He includes none of the four SFs which characterize Japanese application letters: i.e., "social talk, " "disqualification," "petition," and "promise."

4.2 Sample 2: X Group with High English Proficiency and Low Cultural Awareness

Sample 2 was written by Student 2 in the X Group with high English proficiency and low cultural awareness.

*REASON
[I have studied English since I was a junior high school student. English is not so easy to learn, but I'm interested in it very much, because the pronunciation of English words is very different from one of Japanese words, and I like pronouncing them very much. To my regret, Japanese education in English is not so good for learning English conversation. I don't think I have much trouble reading

English, but I can neither understand what English speakers say nor express my thought in English well. Living in the United States is the best way to improve such troubles of mine. That is the first reason I want to study at your college. The second one is that I want to take part in an active lessons. I'm not good at express my opinion to other people. It's OK in Japan, but it cannot be allowed in other countries, so I want to train myself in active discussions in lessons at a college in the United States.

I have been to the United States to learn English before. My parents paid for me in that case. I thank them very much, but I can't have them pay any more.] *APPLICATION MESSAGE [So I'd like to be offered scholarship.]

Since the level of Student 2's English proficiency is high, there are no major linguistic problems in her letter. This sample does not include any of the Japanese-oriented SFs, such as "petition" and "promise." Yet something is wrong. In stating the reasons for application, she unduly underestimates herself, and therefore, violates the norm of the English application letter, where the use of "persuasive" strategies is expected. For instance, she says, "I can neither understand what English speakers say nor express my thought in English well" at one place, and "I'm not good at express my opinion to other people at another." Thus, even though Sample 2 does not violate the linguistic norm of the target writing, it does violates the cultural norm.

4.3 Sample 3: Y Group with Low English Proficiency and High Cultural Awareness

Sample 3 is representative of the Y Group, written by a student with low English proficiency and high cultural awareness.

Dear Mr. Thompson
*APPLICATION MESSAGE
[I want to get the scholarship.]
*REASON
[Because My father has been sick since last year.

And My family is very poor.

I can't afford money to go the college.]
*APPLICATION MESSAGE
[But I want to study English and literature in ABC college.

I want to go to America.]
*REASON
[I'm interested in American costoms, culture, family life and

eating life.

And I want to understand American people and watch beauties of

nature, town.]
*IDENTIFICATION
[Introduction my self and my family.

My name is _____.

I'm nineteen years old. I'm _____ University college student.

My hobbies are playing tennis, watching movies, cooking, and

shopping.

I have four members.

My father, My mother, my brother, me.

My father is 57 and businessman. But he is sick now.

My mother is 48 and House wife.

My brother is 23 and he graduated University this spring but

he doesn't catch a job and in house he is studying law everyday

for exercise.]
*REASON
[I want to learn Literture and American life.

So I want to speak English.]

Student 3 does not include any of the four Japanese-oriented SFs. Yet Sample 3 is still far from acceptable as an English application letter, because it is poorly organized. She mentions her reasons for application sporadically and begins self-introduction too abruptly at an inappropriate

place. Like Sample 2, Sample 3 is not an acceptable English application, but the reasons are quite the opposite: although Sample 3 does not violate the cultural norm of the target writing, it still violates the linguistic one.

Sample 4: Z Group with Low English Proficiency and Low Cultural Awareness

Sample 4 was written by Student 4 who represents the Z Group with low English proficiency and low cultural awareness.

*SOCIAL TALK *IDENTIFICATION
[Hello,] [My name is _____.

I am twenty years old now.

I am interested in American people and culture.

But I've never seen foreign countries.

I want to go to American very much.

Of course, I am studying hard very day.]
*APPLICATION MESSAGE
[I want to get the scholarship.]
*REASON
[Because to help my home's life.

My brother is high school student and my home is very new.

Going to America need much money.]
*PROMISE
[If I go to ABC College, I study harder than now.]
*REASON
[And I want to make many foreign friends there.

I think American is very friendly and kindly.

Sure, I will get nice relationship with them.]
*PETITION
[Mr. Thompson, I want to know American people and culture.

Please get the chance to me.]
*PROMISE
[After year I will grow than now and I will come back to Japan!]

Sample 4 is linguistically poor, with many errors in sentence construction and no organization as a paragraph. Student 4 includes three of the four Japanese-oriented SFs: "social talk, " "promise," and

"petition." She begins her letter with "hello," makes several promises, saying, "If I go to ABC College, I study harder than now," and "I will grow than now and I will come back to Japan!" Also she even petitions Mr. Thompson, saying, "Mr. Thompson, I want to know American people and culture. Please get the chance to me." Thus, Sample 4 is poorly written, both in linguistic and cultural aspects.

5. Conclusion

In this study, we have shown that there are rhetorical differences between Japanese and English letter writing. We have also shown that Japanese EFL studetns transfer Japanese rhetoric into English when they write in English. In addition to these, we have clarified the third point, which was the main concern in the present study: the factors which determine the degree of rhetorical transfer.

The first research question proposed at the outset was to see whether or not the degree of cultural awareness affects the writting behaviors of the Japanese EFL students. The results of the present study have answered this question affirmatively: not only the level of English proficiency but also the degree of cultural awareness toward a target culture/society (English culture/society in this study) affects the Japanese students' writing behavior in EFL. The second research question concerned the respective roles of cultural awareness and English proficiency in the Japanese EFL students' writing performance. The results have shown:

--The Japanese EFL students with high English proficiency and high cultural awareness (X Group) behaved closest to the writing pattern of the native speakers of English;

--The students with low English proficiency and low cultural awareness (Z Group) behaved closest to the writing pattern of the native speakers of Japanese;

--The students with high English proficiency and low cultural awareness (X Group) produced writing whose content was off the point, but their English was acceptable;

--On the other hand, the students with low English proficiency and high cultural awareness (Y Group) produced writing whose content was acceptable, but their English was problematic.

In order for our EFL students to compose writing which is accepted by the English-speaking audience without misunderstanding, we need to develop their cultural awareness towards the English-speaking society as well as their English proficiency. This is especially so in letter writing, which carries a more pragmatic function than the other types of writing.

We need to develop teaching methods and teaching materials which integrate cultural factors with linguistic ones. As Damen (1987) asserts, we need to recognize that "culture learning, along with the four traditional skills--reading, writing, listening, and speaking--can be accorded its rightful place as a fifth skill, adding its particular dimension to each of the other four."

In the present study, we used a cultural awareness test to assess the degree of the students' awareness towards the English-speaking culture. Such questions as were used in our cultural awareness test for a testing purpose could be modified and turned into exercises for an instructional purpose. Then, they could help the EFL students develop cultural awareness as well as linguistic abilities. An example of a more specific type of instruction would be: the students write application letters as first drafts, attempt the SF analysis of their own first drafts, examine whether or not their first drafts have first-language-based SFs, and rewrite the first drafts to make them more acceptable English application letters.

More research will be needed to investigate whether or not cultural awareness is a critical factor when the Japanese EFL students write other types of letter writing. Also more research will be needed to examine

whether or not such cultural and rhetorical instruction as the ones suggested above will have indeed positive effects on the students' writing performance in EFL.

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Appendix 1

Sample Questions from the Original Cultural Awareness Test

Under the following circumstances, which behaviour do you think you are likely to follow? Choose one from the two alternatives.

[Social life]

1. Six months have passed since you came to the U.S. with your parents. Today you have invited Mr. and Mrs. Brown to your home.
They have been very kind to you since you came to the U.S. and this is their first visit. While chatting over tea, Mrs. Brown says to you, "Could I see the rest of your house?" To your regret, the house is far from being clean enough to show to other people. How would you react to Mrs. Brown's request?
   1) You would refuse, saying, "It's such a mess. I really cannot show you this time."
   2) You would show her around, saying, "It's a mess, but if you don't mind that."

2. Mrs. White came to Japan with her husband. Mr. White has some business to do, so Mrs. Nakayama, the wife of Mr. White's colleague, is going to help her do some shopping. You are also going to go with them. When Mrs. White and Mrs. Nakayama first meet, they talk as in the following:
   Mrs. White: Thank you very much for giving me your time.
   Mrs. Nakayama: You're welcome. I usually stay at home, doing nothing particular.
   Mrs. White: Do you have children?
   Mrs. Nakayama: I have two, a seven-year-old and a five-year-old. They have not been taught manners and I've had a lot of trouble with them.
You are listening to their conversation. What would you think of Mrs. Nakayama's talk?
   1) She is very modest about herself and her own children.
   2) It is not appropriate to say bad things about one's own children.

[School life]

3. You are now studying at D. university in the U.S. and taking Sociology I among other courses. Professor Samson, who is teaching Sociology I, takes a discussion style in his class. Since your English is still not good enough, you cannot quite participate in the discussion with American students, although you are trying to. There is another Japanese student, Mariko, in this class. She is always quiet and does not contribute to the discussion. You came here two years earlier than Mariko. How would you advise her?
   1) You would suggest that she tell Professor Samson of her linguistic disadvantage and ask him to acknowledge her willingness to participate.
   2) You would advise her to participate in the discussion as aggressively as she can seeking the professor's help after class as needed.

4. It has been a month since you began studying at B University in the U.S. The other day you were asked to give a speech for an audience comprised of professors. Although you are not confident of your English as it has been just a month, you've decided to give the speech. How would you deliver the speech?
   1) You would try to be confident of your English and not mention anything concerning the ability of your English.

2) You would ,first of all, tell the audience that your English is not good because you are afraid that the audience will be surprised at your poor English.

[Workplace life]

5. You are employed by an American company. Yesterday you saw Jane, who is a co-worker, step into the elevator before Mr. Black who is her boss. You are older than Jane. How would you feel about her behaviour?

1) You would assume it natural since she is a woman.
2) You would try to reprimand her as you think she was being rude.

6. After graduation from college, you climbed up the ladder of success and are now a branch-office manager. As business is good this year, you are quite busy. Today you have work that needs to be done by tomorrow. Unfortunately tomorrow is Sunday. If you fail with this work, it means a loss to the company. So you want your employee to come to work tomorrow. What would you do?

1) You would ask your employees to come to work even on Sunday, explaining to them it is for the sake of the company.
2) You would ask for volunteers to help with the project, stressing extra benefits for those who choose to do so.